

## GRADING UP

by RODNEY JAMES,  
Calgary, Alberta.

Welcome Shorthorn Breeders from around the world to Calgary, Canada. While we Calgarians are no doubt biased, we believe that in this area of North America some of the very best commercial and purebred cattle are produced. The cattle in this area must not only survive but thrive under extremely wide variations in temperature---perhaps the most extreme in the world.

We are pleased to host you here for this Congress and hopefully we may learn from you and you from us.

The subject to be discussed in this section is "Grading-Up". Most purebred breeds who have adopted this system have done so out of necessity. Due to the small numbers in their breeds it has been essential to use foundation cows of another breed to expand their numbers.

My first experience with "Grading-Up" was with Charolais and goes back to the late 50's. Charolais were first introduced into North America in the late 30's when a small group came to Mexico from France. Due to the very limited numbers, only a few bulls were allowed to be exported to the U.S. and no females. From this handful of bulls, the breed was expanded into one of the major breeds in North America, through "Grading-Up".

The only new Charolais blood introduced was after 1965 when a new "Maximum Security Quarantine Station" was established by the Canadian Government to allow European breeds to come directly to Canada.

### WHAT BENEFITS, IF ANY HAVE ACCRUED OTHER THAN EXPANSION OF NUMBERS?

Most if not all breeds have some superior traits. Few if any can provide the beef industry with everything the commercial producer needs to produce beef most efficiently and thereby most economically, and none are faultless.

The European breeds have made a definite contribution to the North American beef industry.

Most of these European breeds have been improved for North American conditions by "Grading-Up" through the existing British Breeds. The imported animals and their fullblood offspring are still generally bringing higher prices, however, this is in most cases due to the limited supply compared to the numbers of bred up animals available. The market place will ultimately pay the highest price for the best cattle whether "Fullblood" or "Graded-Up".

None of the North American, European breed Associations to my knowledge have placed any restrictions on the breeds to be used in the "Grading-Up" process, nor have they placed any additional type or performance requirements other than those applicable to their purebreds.

With all other breeds available in the "Grading-Up" programme, the genetic material is unlimited. Individual breeders are allowed the opportunity of using a breed or breeds that they feel will contribute traits that most need improving in their herds. There is considerable research data proving that improvement can be attained much more rapidly by introducing another breed than by selecting within the breed.

Some breeds have wide variations of type and performance within the breed, making it possible to select extremes within the breed to make rapid improvement. Even these can benefit from the hybrid vigor derived from the infusion of outside blood.







-2-

Long established breeds such as the Shorthorn breed, have been selected over many years and as a result are much more uniform than many of the new breeds. In some respects this uniformity is an advantage, as buyers of your bulls can expect more consistent results. However, this uniformity limits the breeders in their desire to make quick and possibly drastic changes in their herds.

As mentioned earlier, it must be recognized that no breed is perfect. Therefore when introducing another breed it must be kept in mind that while you are no doubt going to improve the trait you are selecting for, you must be careful not to introduce undesirable traits. There will be certain trade offs. If the objective is to increase frame size and gainability---you must accept bigger calves at birth. This does not have to mean more calving problems. We are fortunate today in that there is considerable information available on most breeds, where bulls have been identified that produce big, fast-gaining cattle with very minimal calving problems.

Any breed Association has the right to establish rules governing the breeds that can be used. Being a free enterpriser I object to Government or Associations telling me how to run my business. I therefore feel that the breeder's should be allowed to use their judgement as to what breeds have the characteristics that best suit their own needs and that of their customers.

As mentioned earlier, most breeds have adopted the "Grading-Up" procedure to increase numbers. These breeds have accepted the "Graded-Up" animals as pure bred after, from three to five generations of back crossing.

In some cases the breeders are required to go one more generation for bulls than females. The Simmental breed for instance accepts 7/8 as purebred females, however, the bulls must be 15/16 to be purebreds. The Charolais breed requires both to be 15/16 or five generations from the foundation.

Unfortunately cattle raising and improvement is a slow process. If another breed was introduced in 1980 it would be 1985 before any third third generation or 7/8 would be dropped. This fact adds to the challenge of the purebred seed stock business. As you people are aware the rewards are many, for those who are determined and dedicated, not the least of which is affording the opportunity to meet new people at functions such as this.

I wish you the very best in your endeavors and want to express my appreciation for being given the opportunity of visiting with you today. Have a safe journey home.







## GRADING UP

by R. F. (BOB) HYMAS

Ladies and Gentlemen---welcome! Welcome to Canada and welcome to my home Province of Alberta. It's a privilege to be a part of this great gathering of Shorthorn Breeders, and to have the opportunity to partially present Canada's position as regards to "Grading Up".

For many years we have had to listen to complaints such as "Shorthorns are too small", "Shorthorns are too fat", "Shorthorns don't grade out". Unfortunately, although this is no longer true, a reputation once built is very hard to contradict.

We in Canada have established a "grading up" programme to assist us in recapturing a genetic pool lost to us during the "fad" years of the '60's and early '70's.

The Breeder who refused to jump on the Band wagon with the small, compact little Shorthorn of that decade, kept their herds pure, but did not bother to register them.

As the Exotic influx hit us, we were left "holding the bag" so to speak.

As early as 1970 a Moratorium was held, allowing for one year, from the enactment of the Resolution, the registration of animals 5 years of age and older, which could be identified through personal records as pure bred Shorthorn cattle, to the satisfaction of the Board. A set of seventeen Rules for Upgrading were established allowing progeny of a 7/8 female, having been upgraded by the use of a quality pure bred Shorthorn Bull to be registered in the Canadian Shorthorn Herd Book, after a satisfactory examination by a Committee of three Directors of the Province in which the animal was maintained.

Two further expansions of the programme occurred. First in 1975 when the progeny of purebred sires and percentage females were allowed recorded status; then in 1976 when the reverse of pure bred females and percentage bulls were permitted.

Many of the non-registered, pure bred herds were inspected by Canadian Shorthorn Association Field Personnel. Where records were not available, these herds were entered into the graded up herd book at 3/4 status thus expanding the genetic base upon which the re-building programme could begin.

Identification is simple. In Canada, a registration number prefixed by a "G" indicates graded up. A new series of numbers starting with 1 was issued when the Graded Up Herd book was established. A yellow paper indicates a recorded animal; a white paper with green printing indicates a registered animal in the Graded Up book.

Females at 7/8 level and bulls at 15/16 have reached registered status in the Graded Up Herd book, and are allowed to show at all major shows and sell in consignment sales.







-2-

One of the first graded up animals to sell at public auction was a February heifer calf at the 1976 Canadian Western Agribition Shorthorn Sale for \$2,100.00.

Graded Up books are under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Shorthorn Association, with records being kept at Canadian National Livestock Records. From May 1971 to the present date, there are 675 Registered status and 527 Recorded status in the Graded Up herd book.

A matter currently under discussion concerns the transference of animals of registered status from the Graded Up book to the Closed Herd Book. This is not permissible at this time, but could become possible at some future date.

The programme allows for inventiveness in the adventure of breeding to produce a superior type in either Beef or Dairy Shorthorns, and is restricted only by the individual Breeders failure to read the signs correctly.

For the past three years, we have been attempting to "meet the challenge" as suggested to us by the illustrious panel of speakers presented at the 2nd World Shorthorn Congress in Australia. We have attempted to "build" a better Shorthorn that would be acceptable in today's market---I might add, with some considerable success in this country. Today the challenge we are facing is the marketing of this new Shorthorn. We in Canada believe that through our Grading Up programme we have the means to the end. All that remains is for us to encompass the vision and build on the solid foundation that has been laid for us. This World Congress is the giant step towards Marketing this great new Shorthorn. Let us use it, build on it, expand it and through it bring Shorthorns, once again, to their rightful place in the markets of the World.





## GRADING UP

by Dover Sindelar,  
Billings, Montana, United States

When Sherman Berg asked me to say a few words about this topic, I envisioned that at last someone thought I was smart enough to give some pointers on breeding a better kind of Shorthorn. However, much to my surprise, I found that my topic related to the Up-Grading of purebred, but non-registered cattle into the American Shorthorn Association Herd Book, specifically the Genetic Recapture Program of the American Shorthorn Association.

After many thoughts about this, I decided the best way would simply be to tell the story of the involvement of our Family in Shorthorns.

My grandfather, John Dover, purchased his first Shorthorn in the early 1880's near Billings, Montana. These cattle were already in the area having been brought into the Yellowstone Valley from western Montana and a few years before that from Oregon. Grandfather was an excellent farmer and horseman. He raised horses, selling to the homesteaders and also doing a brisk business with the U.S. Cavalry. The range was open, so Shorthorns for him were a profitable sideline. They provided meat, milk and income from 4 and 5 year old steers. As a boy growing up, I never heard him say much about the history of our cattle. Shorthorns were a part of the ranch and pretty much taken for granted. As I got out into the world, visited with old timers and neighbours, it became apparent how well known these cattle were. A hardy, rugged breed, they ranged a vast area and stories about them would fill a book. Truly a survival of the fittest type operation that was to span some sixty years.

In 1940 my mother was to take over the ranch operation. Although registered bulls had been used down through the years, she went a step further and purchased an entire registered herd known as the French cattle, named after the breeder. She attended some of Claude Gallanger's Sales and many others, introducing a lot of new blood into the herd. We began to do some showing and selling of breeding cattle.

In the early 50's, my wife and I and our children began to take over the cattle operation. Shorthorn feeder steers were at a premium and our operation was geared to that end. Somewhere in those years, we formed a double standard in our herd. Registered cattle had to be a certain type, commercials another and there was never any doubt in our minds as to the latter. I can remember many times sorting the registered heifer calves as to which we would record and the conversation would go something like this, "Look at that beautiful blocky heifer; she'll make a dandy registered cow; that long, tall gal over there will make a wonderful range cow---no use to record her". The double standard, and we bought the bulls that way too. Always the show winners, the high priced individuals were bred to the registered cows.

In 1956, we began to keep weaning weights and those short blocky cows weaned fairly heavy calves. In 1968 we joined the Montana Beef Performance Association comparing both the registered and commercial calves out to yearling weights. Guess ~~where our registered cattle~~ then







stood; almost without exception in the bottom 25% of the herd. The double standard created in the showring and promoted by many had caught us. We bemoaned the fact that the wrong cattle in our herd were recorded and because of this, we were selling the wrong cattle to other breeders. Others in our breed were finding the same thing, particularly those who were performance testing.

Through the tireless efforts of two South Dakota breeders, Orville Stangl and Gary Englehorn, working with Pete Swaffar and other interested breeders, the Genetic Recapture Program was conceived and then approved by the membership. At last we had a vehicle to retrieve that which we should have kept in the first place. After four generations of recording purebred, commercial offspring could move into the Herd Book. There are undoubtedly similar programs around the world Shorthorn community, Canada was ahead of us with theirs.

Our Program in its entirety takes years of time and does not come cheap, so you might ask why not go out and replace those cattle with registered females. I doubt very much if we could find replacements that could produce on our range conditions. We still believe that some of that survival of the fittest is not all bad and we run them that way. A cow herd that is acclimated and in a high state of production is hard to replace. We feel that we would have to look to another breed to even come close.

At present we see no monetary gain from our use of the Genetic Recapture Program. We have been moving from fifty to eighty yearling bulls annually into the commercial trade and these people are not interested in paper. Gradually though, as more of our females attain herd book status, we expect demand for them. Replacement females have always been one of our top sellers.

Our own Performance Testing Program and trips to several Test Centres with our bulls bear out that we are on the right track. Cattle from this GR Program are our best and stand well against any on Test. We market with confidence because this Grading Up Program does fit our situation so well and our support of the American Shorthorn Association has been well returned in service to us and our area.



